

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 4648

EXDIS

PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR VAVANEY

E.O. 11652: NGDS

TAGS: OCON, PFOR, NATO, BE, MASS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL BILATERALS WITH BELGIAN GOVERNMENT

REF: BRUSSELS 4486

1. U.S.-BELGIAN BILATERAL TALKS:

VAN BELLINGHEN, CHEF DE CABINET OF FOREIGN MINISTER
VAN ELSLANDE, SAYS THAT ONLY PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS
AND FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSANDE WILL PARTICIPATE IN
THE BILATERAL TALKS WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY
KISSINGER. SENIOR ADVISORS WILL BE READILY AVAILABLE
IN A NEARBY ROOM IN THE PALACE.

THE BELGIANS WOULD LIKE TO ADD CHINA TO THE SUBJECTS TO
BE DISCUSSED. TINDEMANS AND VAN ELSLANDE RECENTLY
VISITED CHINA AND PROBABLY THINK THAT THE PRESIDENT AND
THE SECRETARY WOULD WELCOME A FIRST-HAND REPORT.

2. U.S.-FRENCH BILATERAL TALKS:

THE BELGIANS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR
THESE TALKS. THE FACTORS ENTERING INTO THEIR
CONSIDERATIONS ARE: (A) THEY WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT
GISCARD, AS A HEAD OF STATE, DOES NOT SLIGHT THE
BELGIAN KING. (B) THEY DO NOT WANT ARRANGEMENTS FOR
THESE TALKS TO IMPINGE IN ANY WAY ON THE NATO MEETINGS.

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(C) THEY DO NOT WANT THE OTHER GUESTS AT THE DINNER TO

BE INCONVENIENCED.

APPARENTLY A NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AND FOUND DEFICIENT. EVIDENTLY THE FRENCH SUGGESTED THAT THE MEETING TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE DINNER. THE BELGIANS REACTED NEGATIVELY, FEARING THIS MIGHT CUT SHORT THE NATO MEETING OR DELAY THE DINNER. THE BELGIANS THEN SUGGESTED TO THE FRENCH THAT THE U.S.-FRENCH BILATERAL TAKE PLACE IN TINDEMANS' OFFICIAL BUT NOT ACTUAL RESIDENCE AFTER PRESIDENTS FORD AND GISCARD LEAVE THE PALACE. THE FRENCH REPORTEDLY DID NOT LIKE THIS IDEA. THEY SAID THAT A 10 - 15 MINUTE TALK IN THE CORNER OF THE RECEPTION ROOM (WHERE THE PRIME MINISTERS AND FOREIGN MINISTERS FROM THE OTHER NATO COUNTRIES WOULD BE HAVING COFFEE) WOULD BE SATISFACTORY. THE BELGIANS ARE PONDERING THIS OPTION. FIRESTONE

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